REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application and for indicating that claims 15 and 17 contain allowable subject matter.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 2 and 12-17 are pending in this application. Claims 2 and 12 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 12.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 112

Claims 2 and 12-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as indefinite. Claims 2 and 12 have been amended to clarify the language. In particular, "assembled in advance to" in Claim 2 has been replaced with "prior to fastening to said framework" in order to clarify the assembly of the building boards. Further, as suggested by the Examiner, the verb tense of claims 2 and 12 has been revised to clarify the method steps. Applicant believes the amended claims are definite. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claims 2 and 12-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,301,484, issued to Jansson ("Jansson"). Claims 2 and 12 have been amended in this reply to clarify the present invention recited. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Embodiments of the present invention advantageously provide a method of fastening a building board to a framework of a building using fixtures attached to the rear surface of the board, so that the front surface of the board remains free of damage. Embodiments of the present invention also provide improved wind pressure withstanding force. Embodiments of the present invention do not rely on the installment of furring strips thereby reducing the amount of time and work needed to fasten building boards to a building.

Amended claim 2 recites a method of fastening a building board to a framework of a building, which involves that the building board has a flat configuration and the rear surface is provided with engaging protrusions *of substantially similar shapes*, and an elongated fixture with engaging holes *of substantially similar shapes* which is adapted to detachably engage with the building board. The building board is assembled, prior to fastening to said framework, together with the elongated fixture through an engagement between the engaging protrusions and the elongated fixture. Then the elongated fixture is fixed to the framework of a building, thereby fastening the building board to the framework of a building. A first building board is disposed at a lower level and fastened to the framework of a building using said fixture attached to the rear surface of the building board. A second building board is disposed over said first building board along the upper horizontal edge of said first building board. Then the second building board is fastened to the framework of a building by inserting the engaging tongue of the fixture to the rear surface of the second building board into the engaging region formed in the fixture of the first building board. Amended claim 12 parallels amended claim 2, with the inclusion of fastening a building board to a framework of a building by making use of

a fixture.

Jansson discloses a prior art device for fitting glass façade elements to a building façade, in which the façade elements are glued to profiled sections which are secured to the building façade by means of fastener devices, such as screws. The device includes three parts, a member to be fixed to the lower edge portion of the back of a board, a member to be fixed to the upper end portion of the back of a board, and a mount member to be fixed to a building frame or furring strip independently of the boards, using a screw. The manner of engaging the boards with the fixture is such that an insertion tongue is to be inserted into a concave portion. The engagement devices located at the top of the back of the board and those located at the bottom of the back of the board are different. Fig. 6 shows that the device attached at the top of the back of the board is a concave portion, or channel, and that the device attached at the bottom of the back of the board is an insertion tongue.

In contrast to the device disclosed by Jansson, the present invention recites a method for fastening a building board to a framework using a fixture with a plurality of engaging protrusions *of substantially similar shapes* that are arranged on the back of a board on a longitudinal straight line, and a long fixture made of a single plate with engaging holes *of substantially similar shapes* formed in the main body. Jansson discloses two different devices to be attached at the top and bottom of the back of a board, one that is an insertion tongue, and one that is a concave portion to receive an insertion tongue.

In Jansson, the manner of engaging the boards with the fixture is such that an insertion tongue is to be inserted into a concave portion. The positioning of the upper

board is simplified, because there is a protrusion for supporting the lower end portion of the upper board, and the insertion tongue is intended to be inserted into the concave portion of the fixture until the insertion tongue contacts the bottom of the concave portion. However, engagement of the insertion tongue of the fixture with the concave portion formed in the upper end portion of the lower board would result in an undetermined position of the end of the insertion tongue, thus making it difficult to fix the lower board first. In the present invention, by inserting the tongue formed at the lower end of the fixture fixed to the back of the upper board into the opening at the upper end of the fixture fixed to the back of the lower board, the joining of the upper and lower boards can be easily established.

Additionally, the engaging protrusions of the present inventions are thin, and the fixture can also be formed thin, such that there is no need to provide a distance between the building frame and the board more than necessary. The invention disclosed by Jansson includes a much larger fixture with protrusions for joining the lower and upper boards that would necessarily result in a much larger gap between the board and the stud or formwork.

In view of the above, Jansson fails to show or suggest the present invention as recited in the claims as amended. Thus, the claims as amended are patentable over Jansson. Dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 103

Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over U.S. Patent

No. 5,301,484, issued to Jansson ("Jansson"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The current invention discloses a method for fastening a building board to a framework of a building by making use of a fixture, wherein said fixture is constructed such that it comprises a main body which is designed to be entirely or partially contacted with the rear surface of a building board; engaging holes of substantially similar shapes formed in the main body, wherein said building board is a ceramic building board.

As discussed above with respect to the § 102 rejection, Jansson fails to disclose or suggest a method of fastening a building board to a framework, that includes engaging a building board to a fixture using a plurality of substantially similar shaped engaging protrusions into a plurality of substantially similar shaped engaging holes and then fastening the fixture to the framework. Jansson also fails to disclose or suggest a method that allows for the upper board to be attached prior to the lower board.

Additionally, the entire width of a board in a longitudinal direction is supported and reinforced by the longitudinal fixture made of a single plate when installed according to the present invention. Because ceramic siding boards are longitudinal boards made of cement, it is necessary to provide sufficient wind pressure resistance when the boards are installed by the normal lateral installation technique. In this sense, the present invention provides an outstanding reinforcing effect.

In view of the above, Jansson fails to show or suggest the present invention as recited in the claim. Thus, the claim is patentable over Jansson. Dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant thanks the Examiner for considering the Information Disclosure Statement of April 2, 2003. However, Applicant has not received an initialed PTO-1449 for the Information Disclosure Statement filed on October 18, 2002. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests consideration and return of an initialed PTO-1449 for the Information Disclosure Statement filed on October 18, 2002.

Acknowledgement of Priority

Applicant claimed foreign priority, under 35 U.S.C. § 119, of Japanese Patent Application Nos. 026749/2000 and 044820/2000 at the time of the filing of the present application. However, the Examiner has not acknowledged this claim for foreign priority. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests acknowledgment of the said claim for foreign priority.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 06756/006001).

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 8/16/04

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